Chapter V

BIRTH CUSTOMS: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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Physiological ideas clarify only part of DÛan's tale. To illuminate other underlying tenets, we begin with the idea of help.

Help

[812] In "Influences on Health" (p.27) it was pointed out that Bang Chan conceived of individuals as unique beings, each with his fate in his own hands, with no bonds nor responsibilities to any other being. In an earthly existence, though, it would be difficult to obtain satisfaction or even life itself under such separatist terms. What relationship was possible between such autonomous beings? How in fact was rebirth brought about? Help (chuai) was the fundamental principle for organizing social interaction. Without help, the villagers saw existence not only as lonely and ineffective but even unrealizable. With it, personal and mutual goals were achieved, and life was enriched. People were "independent agents serving each other because it is mutually beneficial" (Phillips:83).

Responsibility for initiating help lay formally with persons of greater age or higher status. Elders assisted juniors, government officials assisted peasants. They received in return gratitude, obedience, and respect. Parents received care in their old age from the children they had nurtured. In the ordinary walk of life, particularly in a household, though, aid took the form of a continuous give and take with associates. The view of help as the mainspring of social action cut through many a problem of initiating aid or waiting on another to act, for fundamentally, on the cosmic scene, all beings were equally old. The child who helped most by giving over his earnings was loved most by his parents [593] (Phillips:89); when married, children helped their parents less than before marriage, still less if they cooked in separate kitchens in the same house, and much less when they moved to a separate house, for their time and cash went increasingly to maximize their own interests.

The genetic connections of those who did not help in cash, or labor at, say, cremations or cooperative work-parties were forgotten. Degree of help was a measure of kinship solidarity, and even marked the outer boundaries of kinship.

The word "help" turned up over and over again in the context of childbirth. Birth came about because a married couple, already steeped in the knowledge that they had been so helped by their parents, "helped another individual to new life" through the mingling of semen and blood. The midwife's role was merely to "help." When a woman engaged a midwife, her words were, "Will you come to help me?" A baby having trouble breathing right after delivery "had to be helped for half an hour." Most important, only through the reciprocal help of mother and child was rebirth to earthly life implemented at all. Parturition was an active, cooperative venture between 2 autonomous beings. The child set the time for labor to start by "deciding to be born" when his 32 parts were "complete,"[38] and he had worked off sufficient sin in purgatory to permit rebirth. The mother by her labor "helped the child to be born," but she could not succeed unless he actively "helped," too. Though other assistance to her was desirable, such as persons to support her back and press out the infant, only his help was essential. Without it she had a hard or unsuccessful labor. A woman who gave birth successfully without outside help created no stir because it was evident that the baby had been helpful.

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38. Informants were not uniform in opinion here. Some said the khwan (or winyan) was the first "part" to establish itself--arriving at the moment of conception--others that it was the last (Textor:262). In either case it was highly volatile during pregnancy, and the trapping by winnowing at birth was the major means of rooting it in the person. During pregnancy, medicine for wind in the fetus was given "which was not effective if there were no khwan," but whether the khwan was the mother's or the child's was not certain.

153 of making poor milk. Any woman whose milk flowed early and
853 well needed no example, for she was seen as having the habit as an in-born characteristic so deeply ingrained that it came through from a previous incarnation.[43] After nursing was established by the mother, babies were not often given over to another woman's breast because they were reputed to refuse it, "being not used to it."

In sum, the nursing patterns in Bang Chan varied with the previous lactating experience (if any) of the mother, and the ordinal position of her children.

(262 Hauck shows the old way of establishing good eating
846] habits in a baby. "If a mother ate small amounts of many different kinds of foods while lying by the fire, the child would not get diarrhea when he ate these foods for the first time" (1959:14). Through the beneficial effects of the fire, any deleterious qualities of the foods were eliminated (as we shall see in "The Fire of Maturity") and the child had his first experience with these foods in the breast milk.

153 Bang Chan's life was full of secondary opportunities for starting new habits. Every rice crop, every boat purchased, every house built, and all the rites of the life cycle could, if handled properly, start a fresh and fortunate sequence on its way. We shall have more to say of this in discussing maturity.

789 Imitation
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The familiar principle of imitation (Anuman Rajadhon: 154), the influence of like making for like, operated throughout daily life in Bang Chan. An action, event or presence emanated an analogous influence on its surroundings. A woman returned from a visit to the midwife with all possible speed in order to achieve a speedy delivery of her child a few weeks hence. Another pregnant woman visited the temple on the final day of the rainy-season Buddhist

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[829] 43. Bradley's informants gave an example of a deeply ingrained habit: "European and American mothers can better dispense [with the fire-rest] because their own mothers from time immemorial have never been in the practice of the custom, and consequently their constitutions do not at all require it (p.79)."

retreat (ōk phansā) in order that her child would come out (ōk) more easily. Here none sought to divide the worlds of the natural and the supernatural, or to mark off "imitative magic" from the "learning by example of the natural world." A stronger influence came from more powerful agents, so that the effects of the Buddhist temple carried greater effect than the actions of a mere neighbor. Yet any like influence was of aid, especially in a verbal similarity. Thus, an event occurring on a Friday was apt to be auspicious because the Thai name for Friday contains an element identical in sound (though etymologically different) to the word for happiness (wansuk=Friday; suk=happiness), and for the fortunate status of true adulthood (suk=mature, ripe).

Stability in a Floating World

In explaining why some children were "born easily and were easy to raise" (liang ngāi) certain persons simply said, "They were born into the right family. Those born to the wrong family usually die." In defining the "right" family, merit, habituation, and helpfulness converge.

Most families were thought to live together as a group in life after life. In view of the separateness of souls, how was this brought about? The key lay in the conviction that people who made merit together met in future lives. Since most merit-making was undertaken as an enterprise of the nuclear family, sometimes with close kinsmen and friends, they would find each other. Some of the eagerness of friends to help (chuai ngān) with cash or labor was in order to meet in later lives. These persons were used to each other, used to helping each other, and so might marry. Thus, if they lived rightly, the nuclear family, maybe with an infusion of beloved old friends, expected to carry on in the next existence. Although a family's prosperity proved its merit, and its wealth facilitated making more merit, continuity in time was not limited to the wealthy. Proof that a couple had been married in a previous life lay in the birth of a boy as first born. Such a couple was known as a "khū" (pair), and divorce was held to be highly unlikely.

How did a child find its "right" family? After whatever necessary stay in purgatory, the khwan soul of a deceased member roosted in a tree near to its old home, then flew into an accustomed womb. One recalls the start of the blessing (p.48), "Come, khwan! Come my own child!" A woman hoped that the khwan was one previously born to her. "A couple lost its first child. Later the wife was fearing for the life of their sickly second-born." The husband said, "It is according to your sin and merit. If the child is your own child, he will live with you. If not, he cannot."

761 Since only meritorious children were born into the
775 "right family," they were helpful and so easy to raise. The
593 easiest to raise were reincarnations of babies deceased in
the mother's present life. "A girl of three died. Her father
• 829 dreamed he was at her coffin. She asked for water which he
782 gave her, then brought her home. Months later a boy was
born, so easily raised up that people knew it was a rein-
carnation of that girl." Here amiability and the change to
male sex demonstrated merit. In another tale, "a woman lost
many babies at birth. Her husband, thinking it was the same
child trying to be born to that mother, marked the forehead
of the last deceased baby. His surmise proved correct,
because the next baby born had this mark on its forehead."

This assumption that a woman's children were born to her over and over led to a measure of control over the cooperativeness of the child in the womb. A child trained to "good habits" became a meritorious adult who, when reborn, would of course "help" his mother in childbirth. It was advisable to set one's own child into paths of proper behavior, for he could be born again to a descendent, and in all likelihood to oneself.

On the other hand, families were not closed groups. "Like a leech that sticks in one place, then goes to stick somewhere else, so a deceased person may be reborn somewhere else," said a priest. The marriage blessing stated, "May angels, not criminals or beggars, reincarnate as your children." Thus was explained why upright parents might have a disobedient, roaming child. He had roamed into a new family which perhaps he had met during a pleasant casual visit to them in another life. If he did not stay home to make merit with his present family, a wayward child would roam out of it as easily as he came in. Here was the ultimate danger in visiting around too much.

761 Because all individuals lacking in merit died off at
593 birth, some of whom because they got into the wrong family,
782 a selective process continuously weeded out the extremely
[163] non-meritorious so that those who were born usually survived. In fact, Hauck's figure of 90.6 live births (1956:33), the percentage of total pregnancies shows how many meritorious babies were born to the right family!

852 The Winnowing Ceremony

844 This ceremony, described in Dūan's tale, was usually
774 performed shortly after delivery, though it might occur anytime during the first three days of a baby's life. The child, placed on the tray (twins were laid together or separately) was claimed by the mother or the father, who

852 after whoever claimed him, a mother might ask a "wealthy
856 person, of polite, calm, and good character" to do this.
789 The baby also started an association with whatever items were placed on his tray with him. Besides the most common ones mentioned in Dūan's tale were ink and books (which induced learning); gold, rings, jewelry, money (wealth); bergamot thorn, a tin of kaffir lime (sharp wit); and a razor (a good wood-cutter for the fire; said to be a Muslim
852 custom). When the baby was finally transferred from tray
789 to cradle these items were returned to household use. The bamboo cutter, rhizome of phlai, and earth associated with cutting the cord were taken off the tray and buried with the placenta. Their significance lay as part of a binding ritual. The phlai and earth might be taken off ahead of time.

Binding Rituals

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774 Because Bang Chan accorded autonomy to every individual, whatever his age, everyone had the free choice to go wherever his advantage lay. In infancy and childhood, the khwan soul might flee at any time, and could only be re-
[852 captured by a khwan-calling or khwan-ladling rite (Textor: 396-411). After about the age of 8, a tham khwan ceremony helped to bind in and strengthen the khwan soul. In daily life, the fear that a loved one, whatever his age, would withdraw or run away if unhappy, frightened, or over-
829 burdened, dogged people their whole lives. Casual episodes
593 were sometimes viewed with alarm. Once a boy of 10 on his own initiative went off to live a few days with his grandmother only 10 minutes away by boat. His mother complained that he had wandered (pai thiao) and feared it would become a habit. Parents dreaded that grown children would find work away from the village; that daughters would elope; that adopted children or spouses run away; or even that their child, at marriage, would elect to go live with his in-laws. At any time a husband might go into the priesthood leaving his wife and children to fend for themselves, though here the wife had to give her permission and the motive was sympathetically viewed.

A traditional jesting threat was to "go away to the jungle-forest" (pai pā).

The economic and social base for this fear of losing a child to the world was that children were a parental investment with an anticipated return: for the trouble of bearing and raising them, children should work for the family until their marriage. Furthermore, a boy was to bring his parents merit by being ordained, while a girl was to care for them in their old age. If a child moved away

before completing these obligations, the parents lost out on their anticipated reward (cf. L.M. Hanks, 1962).

Since waywardness (pai thīeo) was considered a continuous threat, magical means were taken at the moment of birth to ensure that a child stay close to the family that raised him. The blessing following the winnowing ceremony invoked immovable things: the post, the cat that traditionally never roamed far, the pumpkin that sat and fattened:

> "...Stay at home like the bottom of the house post. Watch the house like a cat. Eat and stay here! Never leave home. Be fat and heavy as the ash pumpkin..."

The most important binding actions utilized, or brought the child into physical contact with, objects long associated with family, in particular the house and land. The umbilical cord was cut on earth or phlai dug from the house-land itself with a bamboo "knife" sliced from one of the deeply sunk house posts. Of these "the knife is the important thing." The phlai also had medicinal purposes. With a feather "from the mother's house" the baby's navel was smeared with cobwebs from a spider whose web indicated long undisturbed residence. They buried the placenta either under some large old tree that stood near the house, or under the house stair. The old family winnowing tray, old clothes, and well-used family possessions were used first before any new furnishings were purchased for the baby. A fire of sakāe wood grown on premises boiled the water for the baby and mother, and heated the mother. Sakāe "was planted when a house was first built so that every generation of occupants would have it available for use at confinement" and also for firewood at other times (cf. McF. 834). All these binding rites assured that the child being rooted to a home terrain, would not wander frightened, and so "would not cry." He also would be at home to participate in the merit-making that would reconstitute the family in another existence.

If a child were born away from home, how was this bond to his locality established? On one to two occasions when the child was born at the Mīnburī Health Center, Hauck (notes, 1954) observed a solution to this dilemma. The mothers returned home, as was customary, within a few hours of delivery and were established by their respective fires. Their babies were winnowed and laid on their trays with the usual auspicious book, pencil, and needle. Neither tray held any bamboo, clod, nor phlai, however, for these had not been used. On one tray, though, was laid a steel knife from the kitchen, mute proof that a family cutting instrument ought to be there. On another occasion, a father asked to be given his child's placenta so as to bury it on the house site. In so far as possible, people in Bang Chan tried to carry on the old rites.

Chapter VII

ATTITUDES TOWARD MODERN MEDICINE AND MIDWIFERY

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Modern and traditional medicine appeared to Bang Chan to have much in common. Both subscribed to a belief in disruptive intrusions. In typhoid and cholera, the old scheme postulated intrusions of fire and earth. Boils involved a spirit attack or excess of fire For these same disorders, new medicine spoke instead of virus or bacterial infection. Such concepts as nutritional deficiencies, insect transmission, and pollution, however, were alien to the old views as disease agents.

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Modern medicines paralleled the old decoctions. Antibiotics, ointments, or pain-pills were appreciated for their efficacy, but evoked no surprise, for every plant in the world was said to have some therapeutic value. Injections were similar to the sub-cutaneous magical protective needle.

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"Old" medicine did not feel threatened because people were not convinced that the modern was better. The 2 systems were viewed as different, each having its own specialties. The difference was sometimes phrased as "Old medicine cares for old ailments, modern medicine for new ones." Spirit possession and khun attack, for instance, were old ailments; poliomyelitis, gonorrhea, and maybe diphtheria, new (J.R. Hanks, 1955:155-195). It was sometimes better not to claim competence outside these customary lines. One mɔ̄ said he could cure gonorrhea, but the young men preferred a city doctor. Sometimes, though, one could not be sure what was a new disease.

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Another phrasing of the proper place for modern medicine was that because of varying "habit," differing social stations required differing medical techniques. "Modern medicine is only good for delicate city people or other kinds of farmers, but does not give enough strength for rice-farmers." The orchardists below Bangkok who "had the habit of eating a lot of fruit," and the teachers and traders of Bang Chan (who went to the second class practitioners, and occasionally to modern doctors) were assumed to have different physical needs than farmers. The post-partum fire was clung to as strength-making: "woman are weak if no fire." The hot ashes chamber, introduced from Bangkok, was for the most part used by non-farm women.

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"not wanting to help." The mother and baby were seen as having to fend for themselves. The very confidence built up in modern medications led to a conviction that doctors maliciously withheld available, effective medicines. "She died at the Center because she needed medicine but was not given any." Personality factors sometimes were involved: one doctor was considered incompetent, fearful of complicated obstetrical cases, and brutally indifferent to a countryman's views and circumstances--("Since we have no room, why don't you charter a bus to take your parturient wife to Bangkok?"), whereas another was friendly and wise. Since doctors were part of the respected government hierarchy which enjoyed superior knowledge and status, and also of the supposedly compassionate medical tradition, they were expected to be competent, kind, and protecting. Those who failed in winning confidence undermined the status of modern medicine.

The midwives themselves thought of the Minburī Center not only as a recourse if a case were in deep trouble, but also as a personal convenience. One male midwife, who was also a headman, monk and carpenter-contractor, was often too busy to stay with a woman in prolonged labor. To turn her over to another midwife other than a kinsman would damage his reputation. Knowing Minburi well, he found the Center a convenient solution to his dilemma. He had respect for the nurse-mid wife's skills, which he had witnessed, and regarded the doctor as a colleague on his own level, a view probably not reciprocated. The women midwives, too, always considering themselves at bottom volunteers, when faced with pressing home chores and the "impossibility of turning a relative over to another midwife," utilized the impartial service of the nurse-midwife. One cloud impeded the female midwives from making full use of the occasion as an opportunity for observation and so instruction. They refused to identify themselves as midwives out of fear of legal sanctions. Having neither taken the course prescribed by the government for "ancient" midwives nor paid the fee, they were not licensed. Thus, they lived in dread of fines if their calling became known outside the community. They knew they were permitted to deliver babies within the family, but outside those rather hazy boundaries, they took refuge in an old view, "I am not a midwife. I only help out of pity."

All in all, the people of Bang Chan had fitted modern medicine into their broad medical scheme where it could be accepted on its merits, if not blocked off by inconvenience, high cost, and discourtesy.

Hospital Delivery

If modern obstetrical method is demonstrably more effective and easier, let the midwives, mɔ̄, and relatives see it! If amiably received by the doctor or nurse, they will bring in patients, and accompany their relatives. The midwives--and many non-midwives--know the practical difficulties, and will be keen and interested observers. In so far as possible any persons accompanying a patient should be permitted actually to assist in some way. Perhaps the country midwife could be allowed to deliver the baby with nurse or doctor alongside to instruct and comment. Such experience is more effective than a dozen travelling demonstrations-with-a-doll. 006

Discussions with the (non-midwife) mɔ̄ who must handle prenatal disorders and abnormal childbirth should be conducted by the doctor, not the nurse, for doctors are viewed as colleagues on the same level. [759 824]

In sum, everything modern should not be expected to be better than the traditional. The complete rationale underlying some modern behavior cannot be grasped at once. Explanation must be given as the second class doctors do it: in terms that can be understood. The foundation for cooperation between modern and traditional medicine is solid. It is the common objective of healthy mothers and children.

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APPENDIX

MUSLIM CUSTOMS IN BANG CHAN

The small Muslim minority in Bang Chan though maintaining its identity, lived scattered through every hamlet, with the heaviest concentration around the mosque at the southern edge of the village. The occasional inter-marriage of Buddhist and Muslim was eventually amicably adjusted to the community and the religion. Some Buddhists manifested a veiled hostility in calling the Muslims "stingy." One said, "Muslims have expensive medicine to induce abortion, after which they might kill the baby. A Buddhist would use this medicine to help deliver, but would not dare take life." The Muslim reputation as a source for powerful magic, especially for love and sorcery, bespeaks some edginess in the relations between the 2 ethnic groups, but Buddhists sometimes sought out the benefit of this magic.

In spite of these separatist tendencies, the Muslims were fully Thai citizens, and participated as equals with the Buddhists in the economic, political and much of the social life. The 2 groups were in many respects interdependent. The Muslims did not object to taking life, so acted as butchers for the Buddhists. Muslims were frequent patients of Buddhist mɔ̄, whether priests or lay. The only Muslim who did a little curing was the To Iman, head of the mosque, but few if any Buddhists came to him for cures. Because every mɔ̄ gave an annual ceremony of homage to his teacher attended by everyone who had benefited from those powers during the year, Muslims and Buddhists met amiably at several large feasts. These festivals were public displays, very competitive in feeling, of the success of the different mɔ̄. One became the largest of the village-wide festivities. Buddhist women attended the Muslim female midwife, teacher-rites, and vice versa. Buddhists and Muslims, especially the prominent families, attended each other's home ceremonies, such as weddings, tonsures, and that part of the ordination held in the home (the tham khwan). Separate kitchens were established at large Buddhist ceremonies so that Muslims could safely adhere to their one dietary regulation, the avoidance of pork. No such arrangements had to be made at Muslim ceremonies for Buddhists had no food taboos, and loved Muslim cooking.

Midwifery was an area of frank, harmonious interchange, with midwives of either religion often attending women of the other. Buddhist male midwives were allowed by the Muslim husbands to attend their wives, though female attendance was preferred. Satisfaction was expressed by Buddhist women over

262 curtailed. About half ate soupy rice rather than rice as
843 usually prepared. All ate fish, but over half ate salted
846 fish only, and about one-fourth ate fresh fish only. Rice and fish were apparently the only foods considered safe by all of these mothers. The only other food eaten by half or more of them was banana of the (4)nam-(4)waa variety, baked bananas being commonly specified. Vegetables, when they were eaten, were usually in (1)kaeaeng (1)liang, a broth made with dried fish, and reputed to be valuable for milk stimulation. In Bang Chan, the inflorescence of banana was commonly used in making this product, but other vegetables were favored by some. When asked what foods they considered good for a woman who had recently borne a child, no mother knew of any such food, but the list of foods mentioned as being bad for the mother during the post-partum rest period included more than a dozen items mentioned from 1 to 4 times each: egg, sweets, beef, vegetables, meat, pork, poultry, fresh fish, sour tasting foods, jackfruit, mangoes, fruits of all kinds, and glutinous rice.

262 Fear of illness from eating incompatible foods after
842 child birth was rather strongly expressed by many informants,
753 even by some who knew of Chinese customs which were different
829 from the ancient Thai customs. Some also knew that foods which were customarily forbidden to the woman who had her child at home in the village, were not forbidden at the government health and maternity center at Minburi.

126 The 45 mothers who were interviewed during lactation,
262 but after work had been resumed, ate more nearly the usual
846 diet than was the case during the post-partum rest period. As in pregnancy, the mothers apparently had no notion of special dietary needs during lactation, but foods considered undesirable during lactation were mentioned 27 times. The list included 12 kinds of food, and four attributes of food, i.e. sour and hot tastes, fermented foods and raw foods. No food was considered harmful by a majority of mothers, the one which occurred most frequently, jackfruit, being mentioned by 8 only of the 45 informants.

262 Reasons were seldom advanced for considering various
753 foods unsuitable for mothers or children. During pregnancy,
853 the hot-tasting foods, i.e. those made with chili, were said by one informant to injure the baby's complexion. When asked at what age a child could have adult food, mothers might say at one or two years, but often specified without giving a reason, that the child could have anything but the hot-tasting foods. A reason given for omitting jackfruit from the diet during lactation was that it would cause diarrhea in the baby. One informant said that if a mother nursing a young baby, 1 or 2 months old, ate fresh vegetables, the baby would have diarrhea. Some informants said the "fragrant banana"[1] caused

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1. The type of banana most familiar to people in the United States.

concerning its culture and use. Tilapia culture was learned largely by trial and error, and was considered primarily as a source of extra cash. If it had been regarded also as a means of improving health through increasing the family's food supply, and if the homemaker had been shown how to use this unfamiliar fish in familiar ways, the outcome might have been different. Increased use of fermented fish and of small dried fish which are eaten whole, should be encouraged. So long as the ability of human beings to adapt to such low calcium intakes without harm has not been proved, any feasible means of increasing the calcium content of the diet seems worth trying.

More home consumption of eggs would be desirable, but their ready sale and acceptability for barter may present an obstacle to increased home use. Increased production would probably lead to some increased home use at least at the peak season. Duck eggs which are less often sold, might be stressed both for this reason, and because of their greater size. The idea held by some that eggs are not good for children nor for pregnant women should be countered when possible. Since hard cooked eggs have many ceremonial uses, they might be presented as "strengthening" food. Hard cooked eggs, which could be prepared the night before, would be convenient as breakfast for workers who would otherwise go to the field without food, for lunch to be carried to the field or to school, and for occasions when parents are to be away from home, as at a ceremonial, and should leave food at home for children.

Milk, as canned, dried or malted milk preparations, was considered an appropriate gift for the priests, who are forbidden to eat solid food after the 11 a.m. meal. Some of this may be shared with the temple boys. The respected old ladies and others who stay overnight at the temple on the Buddhist holy day, and who observe the same rules as the priests for this time, also like to drink milk, often with coffee. Perhaps the wat committee could be taught how dried or canned milk should be reconstituted, and could direct that this be done. They could both spend some of the cash offerings for milk and encourage those who buy gifts of food for the priests to include milk among them. People gladly bought food for the priests and would probably accept on the authority of the head priest or respected elders, the idea of buying certain foods of high nutritive value, even though these cost more. If a small group of leaders, such as the wat committee or the hamlet headmen were instructed in the dangers of contaminated water and the values of good food, with the implication that the best available should be offered the priests both daily, and on ceremonial occasions, improved practices might spread to home consumption, since most food is prepared in the home.

The importance of merit making and the relatively large cash expenditures involved in ceremonials, will probably influence acceptance of any improved practices which involve cash outlay. If some leaders were interested in dietary

846 Bang Chan. The only other woman in this series who did not
262 restrict her diet postpartum was the wife of a school teacher. She said that women were supposed to eat rice with salt or salt fish at this time but that she ate all kinds of food.

As a rule, a woman's diet was considerably curtailed during the postpartum rest period. Rice and fish were apparently the only foods considered safe by all of the mothers interviewed. About half ate fish, but over half of these ate salted fish only, and about one-fourth ate fresh fish only. The only other food eaten by half or more of the mothers was banana of the (4)nam-(4)waa variety, baked bananas being commonly specified. Vegetables, when they were eaten, were usually in (1)kaeaeng (1)liang, a broth made with dried fish and reputed to be valuable for milk stimulation. In Bang Chan, the inflorescence of banana was commonly used in making this product, but other vegetables were favored by some.

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• [229] Fear of illness from eating incompatible foods after childbirth was rather strongly expressed by many informants, even by some who knew of Chinese customs which were different from the ancient Thai customs. Some also knew that foods which were customarily forbidden to the woman who had her child at home were not forbidden at the government Health and Maternity Center at Minburi.

Diet During Lactation.

853 The term "diet during lactation" as used here refers to
262 foods eaten when the mother had resumed her usual work following the postpartum rest period. The majority of nursing infants were under a year old when the records were obtained. All of the mothers ate rice everyday cooked in the usual way, and almost all had fresh, dried, or salted fish. About two-thirds had vegetables of some kind daily, but 6 women reported that vegetables of any kind were eaten only occasionally. Coconut, which as coconut milk is the basis for many curries, was used often. One nursing mother ate bananas daily, and about two-thirds of these women had bananas either occasionally or frequently. Only five women mentioned eating other fruits.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

determined. So frequently the provocative, interesting, or delightfully human life histories found in the anthropological literature (Dyk 1938 and Tirabutana 1958 come immediately to mind) are so simply because they are the products of the more imaginative, articulate, and introspective members of the culture in question. The issue of course is not that a biography elicited from an articulate individual is to be considered ultimately any more or less valuable than one obtained from a more "typical" member of the culture—Kluckhohn's "Mr. Moustache" (1945) is ample evidence of what an articulate interpreter can do with the life history of a relatively inarticulate informant—but rather that it be accurately seen against a background of the psychological responses of the members of the community as a whole.[4]

The final stage of the research program is perhaps the most complex. Following the outlines of a recommendation originally made by Inkeles and Levinson (1954) and Inkeles (1959), it aims at presenting a systematic analysis of the *relationship* between the personality tendencies of the villagers, as determined through the foregoing materials on the one hand, and the functional requirements of Thai peasant society, as determined through ethnographic data, on the other.

An analysis of this type rests on at least three premises: (1) that there is just as likely to be a lack of congruence between the psychological capacities and proclivities of a group of people and the psychological demands that are made upon them by their own social institutions (demands that must be met if the institutions are to be maintained effectively) as there is likely to be a close fit, and that a crucial, empirical task of any culture-personality study is to detail the specific areas of congruence and noncongruence; (2) that human beings can bear considerable psychological strain—precisely how much we really do not know—and still function effectively, maintaining both their prevailing personality patterns and

Mandelbaum 1953, among others). The issue is the extent to which the psychological tendencies of life history informants—their readiness to respond and modes of response in various situations, their assumptions and unconscious premises—are typical of other villagers.

[4] I am reminded here of my own ambivalent reaction to a comment once made by a villager who, intrigued by the fact that I was collecting life histories, said: "I have heard about those people who are telling you their life stories. You're smart—getting interesting ones like them. Some of those people can really *phuud keŋ*." To *phuud keŋ* means to "speak well," but more particularly to speak cleverly, fluently, deceptively, convincingly, or beautifully (in an aesthetic sense). Actually, there were numerous individuals in Bang Chan who, in local terms, could speak considerably more *keŋ* than the life history informants. However, as the villager's remark suggests, the ability to be "keŋ-ful" in one's speech is something to which Bang Chaners give considerable attention, often to the extent of seriously modifying the intellectual content of their speech, and is one more factor that must be dealt with in assessing the content of a biographical document.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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various kinds of ants living in Thailand and the United States. (Such are the topics that interest villagers.) The villagers wanted to know the English names for small red ants, normal black ones, and the large, rusty colored variety that are indigenous to the tropics. I named the first two with no difficulty. For the third, I said simply, "a giant ant." The assistant, turning to one of the informants, first gave the literal Thai equivalent of "giant," and then, as if this were the funniest thing he had heard that week, began to repeat, "giant, gi-ant, gi-ant." In a few seconds, they were all bursting with laughter.

Different, yet part of the same psychological constellation, is the whole complex of behaviors associated with the term, *sanug*. *Sanug* is usually translated into English simply as "fun." However, this translation conveys little of the motivational significance of the term. Essentially, *sanug* is a quality inherent in all situations which are not only fun but also emotionally worthwhile. In fact, these two states are often thought of as reciprocals of one another. An activity that is novel, diverting, or that can be done comfortably, is *sanug dii* (good fun); one that is tedious, overdemanding, that lacks the opportunity for frivolity, is not *sanug* and should be avoided. Harvesting rice in coöperative work groups, attending a ceremonial, participating in an election (see Phillips 1958: 45–46), or even taking something as outlandish as a Sentence Completion Test are all *sanug*. (The unifying elements of these diverse activities are either their novelty or the fact that they involve the presence of relatively large numbers of people but require no genuine interchange with them.) On the other hand, going into the army or working for a demanding superior are not *sanug*.

The importance of *sanug* is that it provides the villagers with a standard of value, a measure of how much they wish to commit themselves to a particular activity. The role of this standard should not be underestimated. Villagers who have taken a job in the city, often involving a time-bound daily routine or continuous, sustained attention to a task (work in a small factory, for example) frequently return to the village explaining that they quit "because it wasn't *sanug*. How can you work on a job if there is never any time for fun?" Foreign employers, with their greater concern for the job than with the person who does it and with their annoying tendency to be *cuu cii* (compulsive, fussy, exacting) are a particular target for this indictment, although this is usually based on hearsay rather than personal experience. On the other hand, villagers will often take on free of charge a major job (for example, helping a neighbor build a house) precisely because it is *sanug*. Although there are other considerations operating here—creating or repaying a personal obligation, doing a *bunkhun* ("a goodness") for a neighbor—the "sanug-ful" aspects of the task are always

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that it is simply a "story," a description of the plight of other people, not the self. The story-teller or listener has the pleasure of a vicarious experience, but none of the pain of the real life situation. He can laugh over his good fortune in not being the person who was cheated out of his money or who was caught philandering by his wife. On the negative side, these stories also serve as a means by which the participants can express, through identification and projection, some of their own hostilities. The veil of humor provides in fact the ideal dress for hostility: one can be completely unabashed about expressing one's feelings (of wanting to steal, say, or wanting to humiliate), since what is expressed, in a form so exaggerated as to be acceptable, is simply the feeling and not the act itself. The hostility is made even more acceptable by the fact that it is projected onto the person in the story rather than referred to ego himself. In these terms, the telling of these stories probably does have something of the cathartic function cited earlier in the chapter: aggressions and hostilities that are otherwise kept under careful control are here permitted to emerge not only painlessly, but with a bit of relish. Finally, some of the laughter at these stories is probably also based on the feelings of embarrassment evoked in listeners. This is similar to the "there but for the grace of God . . ." motive but is different in that it is not based on personal identification with the person who suffers but rather on a diffuse feeling of discomfort over the expression of aggression—aggression toward anybody. There is embarrassment over things not being as they should be, over one's moral universe being temporarily out of joint. Also, the laughter is probably symptomatic of the listener's uneasiness as he becomes aware that the hostilities portrayed in the story are strikingly similar to those he himself harbors toward others. Embarrassed about his own aggressive impulses, he assuages them with laughter.

The motives for focusing on whimsical topics of conversation are less recondite and defensive than the above. Stories of the type describing "super-dogs" who find buried treasure are told because they are at the same time such outrageous and yet gentle distortions of reality. It is the juxtaposition of incongruous elements that is so appealing here. In ordinary Thai thought, for example, the dog is generally considered to be one of the most inconsequential and worthless of creatures. He is tolerated for his ability to warn of strangers and dispose of refuse, but nothing remotely approximating the feeling of "man's best friend" is associated with him. For such a lowly creature to be the sudden possessor of miraculous power is just too foolish. An elephant, monkey, or cobra perhaps, but not a dog.[11] Only "uncivilized" forest people would accept such a story. Yet, because the dog is such a familiar part of one's environment and also a living creature

[11] Doubt would exist for these creatures too, but because of their mythological and historical significance it would be somewhat tempered.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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were at first a series of unrelated incidents—that is, the possible tenuousness of the links between parent and child first came to my attention with the occasional, but wholly unselfconscious, reports from informants on what to my Western ears seemed like rather turbulent childhoods: their frequent movement from family to family while they were still children and their own care, as adults, of friends' or relatives' children. (This suspicion was reinforced and partially verified later while recording life histories). Later it was noticed that, in sharp contrast to the West, villagers tend to be less concerned about the illness of children than the illness of adults; informants with whom this observation was discussed said either that they had not noticed or explained it by saying that since children recover so quickly from sickness there is less need to worry about them. Finally and perhaps most important, it became clear that the request of the villager who stopped me and asked me to take and rear her child was by no means idiosyncratic; the request was made on four separate occasions by different individuals, both within and without Bang Chan. The intent of these requests were difficult to ascertain. Since the requests tended to come up rather suddenly, in the presence of the child, and were always accompanied by laughter, they may well have been said in "jest" or as a threat to the child. On a few occasions the parent took pains to be sure the child understood what was being said, in which case the child responded with screaming. Also, Europeans have traditionally been used as bogey men in the disciplining of children. (I myself have occasionally been addressed as a malevolent spirit by youngsters.) On the other hand, because children of poor families have been known to be given to individuals of high status, and because Occidentals are automatically assigned such status, it is not altogether unlikely that the parent was sounding me out as a potential patron of the child.

The problem with all the above, however, is that it was unknown to what extent they represented typical or deviant attitudes and responses. The Sentence Completion item, *"We want to give our child to him because . . ."* was selected for use in the SCT administered to a larger, representative sample of villagers because, being an extreme phrasing of these attitudes, it might shed light on the villagers' general readiness to accept them as well as their justifications for them. Of the fifty-six informants who responded to the item, 79 percent accepted the premise and 21 percent rejected it, *i.e.*, "I do not want to give my child to anybody." Of the forty-five individuals who accepted the premise, nineteen said it was good for either the child or the parent, *i.e.*, "that person was good, and he wanted that person to teach his child to be good"; "I would get some money by giving it away"; "I could not stand the child anymore." And eighteen said it was justifiable, *i.e.*, "because of poverty"; "I did not have the means to rear the child."

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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man who wanted their help for the sake of "knowledge." I came to Thailand because a very wealthy American who manufactured automobiles (The Ford Foundation) had decided to make merit by giving money to universities as well as to monasteries and hospitals; I had applied for a fellowship, and he had given me the money.[4]

In my actual contacts with villagers, I tended to be much more docile and unassertive than is my wont, often to the extent of appearing diffident. Although in the relationships with my assistants I did not hesitate to express my opinions and evaluations of things—often in an excitable and seemingly aggressive way, which is one of my "natural" and extremely non-Thai modes of expression—I tried to keep my comments to villagers free of any evaluation. The only time I really let myself go was in laughter, which villagers liked but which they sometimes thought was undignified. To the countless little frustrations that occur in the field—spending an hour with an informant "making rapport" only to be told that he was too tired to take the TAT; seeing an informant get up at the high point of an interview, say "I must go," and simply leave—I responded either with giggling or stoicism, never anger. This latter posture was particularly difficult to maintain. When the owner of the "Cornell Office" asked me for three times the agreed upon cost of rent and board, I answered first by giggling and then by changing the subject, although neither was in any way representative of my genuine feelings. I later paid the original amount through a go-between, and nothing further was said.

Not all my behavior was oriented toward controlling such feelings, and not all of it was by any means intended as a disguise. In fact, the role of being an "interested, uncritical, and mildly bewildered young man" was not only the best way to present myself to the villagers from the point of view of effective research, but was often the way I felt. (The bewilderment was effective to the extent that it often elicited clarifications and specifications from informants who wanted to be sure I understood.) Similarly, my expressions of laughter were quite consistent with village patterns, and they could not easily be feigned. Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of the pose was when I provided villagers with accurate and truthful answers to questions they might ask, but in an idiom that I thought would be most meaningful to them, *e.g.*, Henry Ford's merit-making activities.

[4] The source of my funds was of never-ending interest to the villagers. One Bang Chaner said he understood what the source of my funds was, but did not quite understand how I actually obtained them. "How does the money get into your wallet?" I explained that prior to my departure from the United States, I made arrangements with my benefactor's secretary to have the money deposited in a bank in Bangkok. And whenever I needed money, I would write a check and obtain the *baht* equivalent of the amount I had written. At this explanation, the villager broke out into a broad smile and said: "That's wonderful. It sounds just like Communism!"

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[789] 22. Have you consulted with a medium frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never?

1. Frequently	7
2. Occasionally	4
3. Seldom	66
4. Never	856

[775] 23. Have you been disturbed by a ghost frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never?

5. Frequently	6
6. Occasionally	8
7. Seldom	55
8. Never	264

[641] 24.a. Excuse me, could you tell me, who is now the prime minister of Thailand? If you know, could you please tell me his name?

1. Correct answer	193
2. Incorrect answer	89
3. DK, cannot recall	111

b. Excuse me, could you tell me, who is now the chief of police of Thailand? If you know, could you please tell me his name?

4. Correct answer	167
5. Incorrect answer	24
6. DK, cannot recall	142

25.a. IF R LIVES IN BC COMMUNE: Who is the district officer in Minburi? If you know, could you please tell me his name?

1. DA, as from Bangkapi	194
2. Correct name of present DO	9
3. Correct name of past DO	—
4. Incorrect name	16
5. DK, cannot recall	111
— No Answer	3

b. IF R LIVES IN KY COMMUNE: Who is the district officer in Bangkapi? If you know, could you please tell me his name?

6. DA, as from Minburi	141
7. Correct name of DO	10
8. Incorrect name	—
9. DK, cannot recall	154
— No Answer	28

[434] [829] [556] 26.a. Throughout the world and here in Bang Chan-Khamo Yao too, it is common among men that there must be some who are rich and some who are poor and some who are neither rich nor poor. How about you yourself? Are you rich, or poor or neither rich nor poor?

1. Rich	2
2. Poor	68
3. Neither	863

b. IF POOR: Here in BC-KY, do you think there are many or few people who are poorer than you?

5. Many	30
6. Few	31
7. Unascertainable	7

125

b. And how about mushroom growing? Do you think mushroom growing yields very good money, good money, or little money? [244]

5. Very good money	68
6. Good money	160
7. Little money	49
8. Unascertainable	56

c. And what about Tilapia. Do you think tilapia raising pays very good money, or good money, or little money? [228]

9. Very good money	15
X. Good money	73
Y. Little money	175
0. Unascertainable	70

39. Do you believe in madiums strongly, somewhat, or not at all? [787]

1. Strongly	12
2. Somewhat	192
3. Not at all	105
4. Unascertainable	24

40.a. Suppose you could do the same work in another rural place and earn ½ more than here. For example, it would be a place 100 kilometers from here. Would you be willing to leave for that place or not? [166]

5. Yes	118
6. No	203
7. Unascertainable	12

.b. IF NO: For what various reasons would you not be willing to go?
(See code at end)

41.a. If you had no land to work in KK-KY would you move to another place or not?

X. Yes	166
Y. No	112
0. Unascertainable	20
— No Answer	39

b. IF NO: For what various reasons?
(See code at end)

42.a. Some people say that, generally speaking people who live in Bangkok have more genuine and lasting happiness than people here in KK-KY. Do you agree or disagree? [369] [829]

1. Agree	136
2. Disagree	134
3. Unascertainable	63

b. IF AGREE: For what various reasons do you agree?

If Agreement (See code at end)

54

125 [369] [829] [793] [792] 42.c. IF DISAGREE: For what various reasons do you disagree?

If Disagreement (See code at end)

43. Do you agree or disagree that all priests are honest and moral men?

X.	Agree	197
Y.	Disagree	90
O.	Undecided	40
—	No Answer	6

[829] 44. Do you think it is right or wrong for a Thai to marry a Chinese?

1.	Right	55
2.	Wrong	182
3.	Unascertainable	91
—	No Answer	5

[775] 45. Do you believe that ghosts bother people? Strongly, somewhat, or not at all?

4.	Strongly	40
5.	Somewhat	136
6.	Not at all	124
7.	Unascertainable	28
—	No Answer	5

[653] 46.a. During the past year, have there been any activities for the public welfare in BC Wat, or not, to which you contributed labor?

1.	Yes	231
2.	No	102

b. IF YES: For what various activities did you contribute labor?

_____

_____

c. During the past year or so, have there been any activities for the public welfare in the wat, or not, to which you contributed money or goods?

1.	Yes	264
2.	No	63
—	No Answer	6

[651] d. IF YES: For what various activities did you contribute money or goods?

_____

_____

47.a. How about activities not connected with the wat or with religious ceremonies in the home. During the past year, have there been any such activities for the public welfare in BC-KY, to which you contributed labor, or not?

1.	Yes	94
2.	No	232
3.	Unascertainable	7

Question 29.h. Reasons respondents give for why some old men have not served in priesthood (multiple choice replies). 125 793 792 828 829

Immediate deprivation	
Dependents (worry about family, have wives, they have many children)	78
Financial reasons (they are very poor, they have no money, their parents are very poor, in debt)	56
Property (worry about property and profession)	15
Life situation	
Married too young (too early, have wives early, "fell in love, got married, acquired dependents, so could not get ordained")	50
Wrong orientation to life (they believe in a wrong way of life, they are lazy and not religious, they pay too much attention to worldly things, they cannot pray, "they don't think of their parents enough, they think only of themselves, and only of the present")	19
Religious belief system	
Apathy to priesthood (they do not like it, feel indifferent about ordination, have no intention of being ordained)	43
Indifference to Buddhism (they are not true believers, they did not participate in religion, "they aren't sons of Lord Buddha," "they don't love their race or Buddha")	19
Qualification	
Illiteracy, ignorance (they cannot read, they are ignorant, "afraid cannot abide by teachings and discipline," "they cannot read so they are ashamed if they become priest")	21
Personality (they are ruffians, they are disorderly drinking men, they are poorly brought up, they are not good enough, mental disturbance)	11
Background	
Lack of parental supervision (their parents can't control them, "nobody would give the advice and so they did not enter the priesthood)	5
Parental objection ("Some men have quarrels and their parents don't want them ordained," "they cannot receive permission from their parents")	2
Other reasons ("Because such men did not get ordained in previous incarnation, either," "because he has sinned in the past life and has had luck in this life," "they have to be soldiers," "they don't know the merit of sin," "they are too old, their merit did not reach the certain point so they did not have the chance," "they have children and sometimes feel ashamed before men who have been ordained," "they forget")	8
No Answer	63
Don't know, unascertainable	37

64

125
369
829

Question 42.b. Reasons for Agreement (multiple choice replies)

Amount of effort in earning a living
- Earn living more easily, lighter work, a farmer has to work too hard, life is hard here--easy there 58
- Can work indoors, needn't work in sun and rain 13
- Other (living is easy if you have money, don't have as many worries as farmers, can trade more easily) 3

Availability of jobs and money
- They have salaries so don't have to worry 11
- Earn more money, earn more money for pleasure, earn money more quickly, can make money in commerce 11
- They have money, they have properties 10
- Can find job more easily 10
- Good occupations 1

Convenience
- More comforts 10
- They can get everything they want, can get everything easily 7
- Can find food more easily, it's more plentiful, food is better 6
- They have communication, transportation, water and light 5
- Everything is convenient 4
- Other (more privacy, children have a better chance for education, many pleasures, better living, no troubles) 5

Other Reasons
- More civilized, they have "knowledge," they can write, they govern the country, Bangkok is progressive, wherever you live you are happy if you behave well 8

No Answer 8

Question 42.c. Reasons for Disagreement (Multiple choice replies)

Cost of Living (Cost of living too High, must spend too much money, everything more expensive, food is expensive there) 34

Availability of jobs and money (Easier to make living here, no way of earning money there, hard to find a job there) 23

Dangers of Bangkok life (Fires, traffic, wars, too much fighting there, cheating, robberies, bandits) 17

No security (Poor people starve there, occupation is not permanent, economically less secure) 14

Urban Atmosphere (It's too crowded, the weather is bad, the air is bad, it's too noisy, too many mosquitoes, no kindness) 14

Integration in Bang Chan, lack of it in Bangkok (Work is harder here--but you have peace of mind, people have no strength or unity there, plenty of friends and relatives here, can live in own house here) 12

Bang Chan is O.K. (There is plenty of food (vegetables) here, life is easier and more convenient here) 9

Specific qualifications needed (Don't have enough knowledge, education, or experience to be happy there, must be a skilled worker) 7

Question 42.c. (Cont'd)

Need for Money in Bangkok (Only happy there when have plenty of money)	6	125
Amount of effort in earning a living (Have to work every day there	4	369
Other reasons (Too many poor people there, many illnesses there, the life of the people there depends on the farmer, people from Bangkok always go to the country when anything bad happens, people can be happy both places, different people have different hearts)	12	829
No Answer	4	
Don't know	5	

Question 46.b. For what various activities did you contribute labor? 125

Earth work		653
Earth work at Wat	18	
Earth work at Mosque	7	
Earth work, unspecified (digging dirt, filling low places, digging Klong, loading and unloading earth and bricks)	53	
Cement Work		
Cement work at Wat (moved cement bags, laid concrete floor)	12	
Cement work, unspecified (building cement sidewalks, helped make concrete, poured concrete)	14	
Building and Repairs		
Building sala (pavilion, repairing pavilion)	51	
Building mosque (repairing Surao porch)	8	
Built priest house, construction work in wat, latrine in Wat, repair crematorium	8	
Building bridge	21	
Building road	13	
Constructionwork, unspecified (carried posts, repair a building, carpentry)	7	
Services		
At Wat fair (helped cook and serve, helped manage, sweeping)	27	
At Surao fair (helped cook and serve)	3	
Services, unspecified (boiled water, cooked, carried water)	15	
Guilding the gold leaf, miscellaneous labor at footprint guilding festival)	7	
Priest's funeral (cooked, helped at cremation)	7	
Other (served at Katlin ceremony, solicited money for Wat)	3	

Question 46.d. For what various activities did you contribute money or goods? 125

		431
To the Wat, unspecified	19	
Contribution, unspecified	19	651
Construction activities		
To build pavilion (sala), to repair pavilion	57	
To make path, build street on Wat grounds	27	

*128 426 511 operators reporting their debt situation, 37 had no debt of any kind, 15 had long-term debts only, 23 had credit purchases only, and 19 had both long-term debts and credit purchases. Frequency distributions of credit purchases and of long-term loans are shown in Tables 61 and 62 respectively.

426 • 829 511 The debt situation in Bangchan can be best revealed by quoting directly some of the remarks made by villagers as follows:

"Rice farmers must have debts. Whoever can so manage to avoid debts should be placed on the financially sound list."

"I have been thinking, all day and all night, of the way to avoid debts -- and all in vain. They finally come to a total of one thousand baht with five hundred baht interest every year. I clear them all every year also. Those who cannot clear this kind of debts are sure dead."

"I always pay cash -- afraid of debts."

"Money-flower[8] (a direct translation of the Thai word for interest) is really a peculiar kind of flower. It blooms best in times of drought and flood."

426 511 ooo Apparently, the term "debts" as used in the above quotations refers primarily to credit purchases. It is not difficult to see how these credit purchases have become institutionalized in the rural areas of Thailand. Writing

8. Thai word for interest is dorg-bia (lit., flower of money).

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 349]